Procurement of foodgrains by West Bengal for APL

1229. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose the State Governments to take over the responsibility of PDS for, APL category;

(b) whether Government are aware that though rice for the scheme can be purchased for this purpose in West Bengal from within the State, wheat has to be procured from out side by FCI;

(c) whether Government are aware that 10 thousand MT of rice per month is necessary while there is no commensurate storage space in the State for this; and

(d) if so, whether Government's proposal is feasible?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) to (b) The scheme of decentralized procurement of foodgrains was discussed during the Chief Ministers Conference on 21.5.2001 and during the meeting of the Standing Committee of Union Ministers and Chief Ministers on Food Management and Agriculture Exports on 6.7.2001. It was clarified in the meeting of Standing Committee that the scheme of decentralized procurement of foodgrains will not be imposed on any State. Further, consultations will be held with the State Governments and sharing of gains under the scheme will be considered with those States which agree to adopt the scheme. The Government of West Bengal adopted this scheme for rice from 1997-98 Kharif Marketing Season. As regards wheat, FCI procures the same and supplies to West Bengal State as per allocation made by the Government.

(c) A quantity of 56946 MTs per month of rice under BPL and APL categories is allotted to Government of West Bengal. As per information given by the Government of West Bengal, the State has a storage capacity of 1.80 lakh tonnes. The process of procurement continues simultaneously with the process of off take from the

godowns and as such at no point of time the entire storage capacity of procured rice is saturated.

(d) The Government of West Bengal has been implementing the scheme successfully.

Storage capacity for foodgrains

1230. SHRI H.K. JAVARE GOWDA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that nearly 50 million tonnes of foodgrains are lying idle in Central Government godowns;

(b) whether it is a fact that the Food Corporation of India is in need of storage space for forthcoming procurement operations; and

(c) what are the plans which Government arc proposing to make constructive use of these food-stocks?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) to (b) As on 1.6.2001, the Food Corporation of India (FCI) was holding a stock of 32.90 million tonnes of foodgrains as against its total storage capacity of 34.36 million tonnes.

The stocks in the Central Pool *i.e.* including stocks held by State agencies is 60.70 million tonnes.

The storage capacity of the FCI increases or decreases depending upon the trend of procurement and off take/sale of foodgrains in the procuringtonsuming States. The FCI creates additional storage capacity by construction of its own godowns as well as plinths besides hiring storage capacity available with the agencies. The field officers of FCI have also been delegated full powers for hiring of storage capacity as and when considered necessary. Keeping in view the requirement for storage of rice, FCI will give 7 years guarantee for creation of additional storage capacity of about 63 lakh MTs by the State Warehousing Corporation, State Governments and Central Warehousing. Corporation in Punjab, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh and